

Message Text

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TAGS: PFOR, ETRD, ENRG, EEC, IR

SUBJECT: EC COUNCIL, JANUARY 20: TRADE RELATIONS WITH IRAN

REF: EC BRUSSELS 00442

1. THE EC COUNCIL OF FIREGN MINISTERS HELD A BRIEF DISCUSSION ON RELATIONS BETWEEN THE COMMUNITY AND IRAN AT ITS JANUARY 20 MEETING. FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER SAUVAGNARGUES BRIEFED HIS COLLEAGUES ON PRESIDENT CHIRAC'S VISIT TO TEHRAN; THE ITALIAN AMBASSADOR GAVE A SIMILAR BRIEFING CONCERNING THE VISIT OF PRESIDENT LEONE. DURING THE TOUR DE TABLE, THE MINISTERS REPEATED THEIR NOW FAMILIAR POSITIONS ON THE QUESTION OF A PREFERENTIAL TRADE AGREEMENT WITH IRAN. GERMANY INDICATED ITS DESIRE FOR SUCH AN AGREEMENT EMPHASIZING, AS BEFORE, ITS INTEREST IN OBTAINING DUTY FREE ENTRY FOR THE PRODUCTS OF ITS JOINT-VENTURE REFINERY. DENMARK CONTINUED TO SUPPORT A BROADER PREFERENTIAL AGREEMENT. THE FRENCH SAID THAT THEY WERE GENERALLY

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IN FAVOR OF A PREFERENTIAL ARRANGEMENT AND THOUGHT IT IMPORTANT

THAT THE COMMUNITY "TAKE COGNIZANCE OF PRESENT-DAY REALITIES" IN ITS RELATIONS WITH IRAN.

2. EC COMMISSION VICE PRESIDENT SOAMES SPOKE OUT FORCEFULLY AGAINST "PRECIPITOUS" ACTION IN THIS AREA. SOAMES SAID THAT IF A PREFERENTIAL AGREEMENT WERE EXTENDED TO IRAN IT WOULD BE DIFFICULT TO PREVENT FURTHER PROLIFERATION. HE INDICATED THAT SUCH AN AGREEMENT RAN COUNTER TO THE PURPOSES OF THE UPCOMING MULTILATERAL TRADE NEGOTIATIONS AND TO PREVIOUS UNDERSTANDINGS GIVEN BY THE EC. HE URGED THAT THE COUNCIL PAUSE AND REFLECT BEFORE TAKING ACTION.

3. THE COUNCIL'S PRESS COMMUNIQUE STATES THAT THE MINISTERS INSTRUCTED COREPER "TO CONTINUE EXAMINING THIS MATTER AND REPORT BACK AT THE NEXT COUNCIL MEETING."

4. SOAMES CABINET TELLS US THAT THE COMMISSION IS TRANSMITTING TO THE COREPER TODAY A WORKING PAPER WHICH CONTAINS THE ELEMENTS OF A POSSIBLE ENLARGED NON-PREFERENTIAL AGREEMENT. THIS PAPER ELABORATES ON THE IDEAS ORIGINALLY CONTAINED IN THE COMMISSION'S JANUARY 1974 PAPER ON RELATIONS WITH OIL PRODUCERS. IT INCLUDES ELEMENTS OF INDUSTRIAL COOPERATION, NON-PREFERENTIAL TRADE ARRANGEMENTS (IRAN, NOT BEING A MEMBER OF GATT, IS NOT YET GUARANTEED MFN RELATIONS WITH THE COMMUNITY) AND FULL UTILIZATION OF THE COMMUNITY'S GENERALIZED PREFERENCE TARIFF SCHEME. THE COUNCIL GAVE THE COREPER STRICT ORDERS TO MOVE RAPIDLY ON THIS SUBJECT. THE MATTER WILL PROBABLY ARISE AGAIN IN THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S MEETING OF FEBRUARY 10-11. GREENWALD

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